as Caretakers. This also includes certain personnel of schools and colleges under the Delhi Administration. The Ministry of Law & Justice has advised that the said amendment cannot have retrospective effect. A case for the regularisation of services of such NCC Associate Officers is under consideration, in consultation with the Ministry of Law & Justice.

Main Battle Tank Project

1186. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA :

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE :

SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the *Time of India* dated the 27th March, 1992 captioned 'Arjuna' tank full of faults ;

(b) what is the progress made so far in respect of the Main Battle Tank (MBT) project ;

(c) the estimated cost involved so far ; and

(d) by when it is likely to be accomplished ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. However, the news report has a number of gross inaccuracies. Main Battle Tank (MBT) ARJUN, is in advanced stage of development and trials. As is common in any trial process for a major weapon system development programme, certain shortcomings were noticed in ammunition firing and track links, which have since been rectified. During recent firing trials, the tank has shown very promising results. As an ongoing activity, reliability of the tank is being improved. When ready, after completion of trials, ARJUN would be a state-of-the-art tank comparable with other world tanks of its class.

(b) 12 Prototypes including 2 fully integrated prototypes of MBT ARJUN have been fabricated. These are at present undergoing automotive and weapon systems trials. Orders have been placed for fabrication of 6 pre-production series tanks for extensive users trials and to facilitate transfer of technology to the manufacturing agencies. Two tanks have been fabricated and are being sent for trials during the summer period in 1992. The remaining 4 pre-production series are likely to be ready by Dec. '92.

(c) A sum of Rs. 225.44 crores has been spent/committed on this project, as on 31 Dec., 1991.

(d) Main Battle Tank ARJUN is expected to be ready for production after completion of trials in 1993.

Exodus of Officers from Navy

1187. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the *Indian Express* dated the 18th March, 1992 under the caption "Exodus of officers puts Navy in the dock" and whether Government have enquired into the matter, if so, the details thereof ;

(b) what is the number of commodores, commanders and captains who left the Navy during 1989-90 and 1990-91, separately ;

(c) what are the basic reasons for their leaving the Navy ; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government to check the exodus of Naval officers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) to (d) The Government have seen the news item referred to.